

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado Unit

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### All it Takes is a Spark

**Camino** - A single spark from a mower blade striking a rock or carelessly disposed of ashes from a wood burning stove or a burn pile left to smolder can start a wildland fire that under dry, windy conditions can quickly grow to a fast moving wildfire. There have been fires across that State of California including one in the Delta due to the very dry conditions.

"We understand that many people are taking advantage of this warmer than average winter weather and are outdoors creating additional defensible space around their homes. We want to encourage this, but at the same time we don't want folks to endanger themselves or their community" says Amador-El Dorado Unit Chief Mike Kaslin of CAL FIRE. "We are cautioning everyone to be very careful until we get some major storms in the area. What can you do to prevent a wildfire? Here are some tips to help you out" adds Chief Kaslin.

#### Fire Safety Tips

##### Gas Powered Equipment:

- Maintain your gas powered equipment in good working order to prevent carbon buildup which can cause a fire
- Allow all equipment to cool for a minimum of 15 minutes before refueling
- Remove rocks from the area to be mowed, a metal blade from a mower striking a rock can cause a fire
- Never mow *dry* grass with a mower designed to cut *green* grass, this is a common cause of fires which may not only result in a wildland fire, but often destroys your mower. The dry grass can get caught inside the mower and catch fire, leaving in its wake a trail of wildland fires and a fire in the engine compartment
- Use a weed eater to mow *dry* grass and weeds
- Have a shovel, fire extinguisher or other water source available and phone nearby in case you start a fire.

##### Proper Disposal of Hot Ashes:

- When cleaning your wood burning stove, place hot ashes in a non-combustible container (metal) and mix them with plenty of water before disposing of them to ensure they cannot start a fire

- Never place hot ashes in a plastic or paper container or dump hot ashes on the ground as they can catch surrounding areas on fire

Debris pile burning:

- Only burn on “*permissive burn days*” so make sure to call your local Air Quality Management District **immediately** prior to lighting your pile(s)
- If it is windy, consider delaying your burning to another day
- Scrape a ten foot wide ring around each debris pile down to bare dirt
- Make sure an adult is in attendance until the pile is completely extinguished
- Use plenty of water to extinguish your debris pile(s)
- Have a shovel, fire extinguisher or other water source available and phone nearby in case you start a wildfire. Never hesitate to call 9-1-1, fires can get out of control quickly and threaten life and property in a matter of minutes.

"Thinking about fire safety is a lifestyle choice that you must make to keep yourself and your loved ones safe. If you want to read more fire and life safety information, please visit our website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)" says Chief Kaslin.

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